

REMARKS

Claims 2, 5, 12, 16 and 19 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1 and 17 were previously canceled. Claims 4 and 6 have been rewritten in independent form. Claims 13 and 18 have each been amended to depend from Claim 4. No new matter has been added and entry is respectfully requested. After entry of the above amendments, Claims 3, 4, 6-11, 13-15 and 18 remain pending.

First, Applicant's gratefully acknowledge the allowance of Claims 7-11 and the indication that Claims 4, 6 and 15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form (page 6, numbered paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Official Action). By the above amendments, Claims 4 and 6 have been rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 4 and 6 are allowable. Claim 15 depends from Claim 4 and is therefore also allowable.

Claims 3, 5, 14, 16 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0219680 A1 to Nishimura et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Nishimura"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5 and 16 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 18 has been amended to depend from Claim 4 which has been indicated to be allowable and which has been rewritten in independent form. Claims 3 and 14 depend from Claim 18. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 3, 14 and 18 are allowable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

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Claims 19 and 2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Nishimura in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,891,603 to Kodama et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Kodama"). Claims 19 and 2 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0148211 A1 to Kamabuchi et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Kamabuchi") in view of Kodama. Each of these rejections is respectfully traversed.

Claims 2 and 19 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Reconsideration and withdrawal of each of the above rejections is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 5, 12-14, 16 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kamabuchi. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5, 12 and 16 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 13 and 18 have been amended to depend from Claim 4 which has been indicated to be allowable and which has been rewritten in independent form. Claims 3 and 14 depend from Claim 18. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 3, 13, 14 and 18 are allowable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

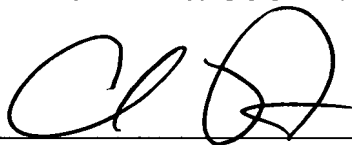
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document and the Patent Office charges for filing this document, including any fees required under 37 CFR §1.136 for any necessary extension of time to make the filing of this document timely, please charge or credit the difference to Deposit Account No. 13-2725. Further, if these papers are not considered timely filed, then a request is hereby made under 37 CFR §1.136 for the necessary extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

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